

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 03014 141714Z

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 AGR-10 IGA-01 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02

COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-10 HEW-06 /078 W

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R 141435Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0617

UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 3014

E.O. 1165" N/A

TAGS: AGR, HO

SUBJ: AGRICULTURE: CROP FAILURE REPORT (1)

REF: LAGAR-SHULER MEMO JUNE 25

SUMMARY:

1. HONDURAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, ESSENTIAL FOR THE POST-HURRICANE FIFI DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, IS SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY GENERALIZED RAINFALL SHORTAGES. CROP FAILURES IN CORN AND BEANS, THE MAJOR STAPLES ARE REPORTED FROM SEVERAL AREAS, BUT ACCURATE PRODUCTION ESTIMATE DATA IS NON-EXISTANT. CROP FAILURE IS CLOSELY RELATED TO A POTENTIAL HONDURAN REQUEST FOR PL-480 ASSISTANCE.

END SUMMARY.

2. THE OFFICE OF CLIMATOLOGY OF THE DIRECTORATE OF CIVIL AVIATION HAS PROVIDED THE EMBASSY WITH RAINFALL DATA FOR 1974 AND THROUGH MAY OF 1975. THE STATISTICS SUPPORT THE GENERALIZED VIEW OF DROUGHT REPORTED IN THE PRESS. OF 28 RECORDING STATIONS, ONLY FIVE VIREPORT RAINFALL MEASUREMENTS IN MAY ABOVE THE 1974 FIGURES. 1974 WAS CONSIDERED NORMAL. RAINFALL IN MAY WAS REPORTED NORMAL BY STATIONS IN CHOLUTECA, COPAN, MORAZAN AND GRACIAS A DIOS PROVINCE. HOWEVER, THE BALANCE OF

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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 03014 141714Z

STATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE MOST PRODUCTIVE PROVINCES

OF COMAYAGUA, THE SULA AND AGUAN VALLEYS AND THE NORTH COAST LITORAL HAD RAINFALL RANGING FROM ZERO TO ONLY TWENTY EIGHT PERCENT OF NORMAL. A SUPPORTABLE GENERALIZATION IS THE RAINFALL IN MAY AND JUNE (SOME IMPROVEMENT) IS LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF NORMAL IN MAJOR AREAS OF HONDURAS.

3. INDICATIVE THROUGH THE STATISTICS MAY BE, ACTUAL CONDITIONS MAY BE WORSE. SOME MAJOR AREAS HAVE NEVER BEEN PLANTED BECAUSE OF DRY SOIL CONDITIONS. OTHER AREAS WERE PLANTED, BUT THESE CROPS HAVE BEEN LOST THE INSUFFICIENT RAINFALL. THUNDERSHOWERS, RATHER THAN BROAD FRONTAL PATTERNS, HAVE BEEN THE SOURCE OF MOST RAINFALL TO DATE. THESE ARE LOCAL IN EXTENT. ONE EXPERT HERE NOTES THAT "THECOUTH FOURTYMAY HAVE RAIN WHILE THE NORTH FOURTY IS PARCHED." A CONCESUS IS THAT THE MOST PRODUCTIVE BASIC GRAIN REGIONS HAVE LOST UP TO FORTY PERCENT OF THE FIRST PLANTING (PRIMERA). SMALL FARM AND SUBSISTANCE PLOTS HAVE BEEN HIT PARTICULARLY HARD DUE TO CONSIDERATIONS OF TERRAIN, LOSS OF SEED, AND TECHNOLOGICAL BACKWARDNESS.

4. THE EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED CROP ESTIMATES, CROP LOSSES AND GRAIN REQUIREMENTS DATA FROM THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK. FURTHER INFORMATION IS BEING SOUGHT FROM AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CROP DESTRUCTION, PRODUCTION DATA, STORMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TEGUCI03014
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750243-0040
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750757/aaaabzht.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JAN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JAN 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <22 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AGRICULTURE: CROP FAILURE REPORT (1)
TAGS: EAGR, HO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006